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LETS FOR LENT

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ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ.

LEAFLETS FOR LENT

Selected and Arranged from

THE BIBLE

And from the Manuscripts of

WILLIAM PHILLIPS TILDEN

Also Selections from his Favorite Hymns

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BY LAURA TILDEN GREENE



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THESE Leaflets, beginning with the words spoken the last Lenten season in the life of Mr. Tilden, have been prepared in accordance with his expressed desire. The subjects and the arrangement of them are the choice and plan of his daughter. One leaf should be turned each day. May this work of Love bring nearer the power of his life given to the service of The Master who leads through all days.

***Y**ET they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways; . . .
they take delight in approaching to God.*

Isaiah lviii.

DO we take delight in approaching to God? Are we not too much absorbed in things that perish in the using? Have we not some weak points that need strengthening? Some vulnerable places in the wall of character, where the tempter has made a breach before, and will again, if we are not on our guard? Do we all live as we believe? I know one who does not, and who would keep Lent with you, in the hope that it may help him in coming a little nearer to living as he believes, all the year round. So this Lent shall be to us, not a season of darkness but of Light, of getting and giving Light; and instead of sackcloth and ashes, let us put on the Garments of Praise.

“Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward.”

SUPPOSE WE SAY TO OURSELVES: NOT A
DAY OF LENT SHALL PASS IN WHICH WE DO
NOT READ SOME WORD OF JESUS, SOME PRE-
CEPT, SOME ACT OF MERCY AND OF LOVE;
THAT SO WE MAY TOUCH THE HEM OF HIS
GARMENT AND BE "HEALED IMMEDIATELY."

FORTY DAYS BEFORE EASTER

FROM THE WILDERNESS TO THE MOUNT

IN THE WILDERNESS.

*J*ESUS being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: . . . If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. . . .

Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Matt. iv. Luke iv.

JESUS OUR LEADER.

FEEBLE, helpless, how shall I
Learn to live, and learn to die?
Who, O God! my guide shall be?
Who shall lead thy child to thee?

Blessèd Father, gracious One,
Thou hast sent thy holy son:
He will give the light I need;
He my trembling steps will lead.

Through this world, uncertain, dim,
Let me ever lean on him;
From his precepts wisdom draw
Make his life my solemn law.

Thus, in deed and thought and word,
Led by Jesus Christ the Lord,
In my weakness, thus shall I
Learn to live, and learn to die, —

Learn to live in peace and love,
Like the perfect ones above;
Learn to die without a fear,
Feeling thee, my Father, near.

WILLIAM HENRY FURNESS.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

THEREFORE also now, saith the Lord, turn ye, even to me with all your heart. . . . Turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness.

Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; . . . and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you:

"What is this that stirs within
Loving goodness, hating sin?
. . . .
'Tis the soul, mysterious name,
Him it seeks from whom it came."

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and break every yoke?

But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Joel ii. Isaiah lviii. Matt. vi.

THE GREAT AWAKENING.

JESUS found the way to God, and waits to show that way to us. He saw the truth of God, and seeks to show it to darkened minds. He lived the life divine, and calls on every child of God to follow. Man is God's child; not an adopted, but an own, child, born out of the bosom of Divine Love, bearing the Father's image and likeness; and though he wanders oft in dark and tangled paths, God loves him still, and ever seeks to win him back from sin and its retribution to goodness and its blessed rewards.

“Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,
With all thy quickening powers:
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours.
.
.
.
Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,
And that shall kindle ours.”

The fire we need must be kindled on our own altars. May the Heavenly Father, who is our Life, and the Spirit of His dearly beloved Son, and the communion of all holy influences, keep our souls on fire with the purpose of being followers of God as dear children.

THE BAPTISM.

AND as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptise you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptised of him.

But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptised of thee; and comest thou to me?

And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Jesus being baptised, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son: in thee I am well pleased.

And John bare record, saying, . . . he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.

Matt. III. Mark I. Luke III. John I.

THE BAPTISM.

JOHN'S voice was sharp and clear, — Repent; re-turn; face the sunrise; open your eyes; leave off sinning; live in the light of God. Jesus hears the voice. It has been borne on the swift wings of a thousand tongues to Nazareth, sixty miles away. He hastens to the Jordan and steps forward and asks of John for baptism. How can John do it? John's voice was not for him. But Jesus says persuasively, "Suffer it to be so now;" and they both go down into the water. As they came up Jesus prayed. Of that prayer in such an hour, from such a soul, at the opening of such a ministry, would we knew the words; but it was made to God, not for man. Heaven was opened, and the Dove of the Spirit rested on him, and a voice was heard, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." John was a voice. Jesus was a life. John came to preach the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus came to build up that kingdom in the world.

O Blessed Jesus! shall we ever know him?

THE FISHERS' CALL.

AND Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers.

And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people.

And his fame went throughout all Syria: And they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

Matt. iv.

THE FISHERS' CALL.

WHY were they the first to hear him gladly?

As Jesus walked by the sea he called these young brothers, because he knew their hearts were free and full of ready zeal. So when he said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," they needed no second call. Immediately they left their nets and their father, and followed him; not to listen merely, but to work. Jesus would show these common toilers for their daily bread that God had great blessings in store for them here; that a man might own half the boats on the lake and yet be wretchedly poor, while another who did not own his own fishing-tackle might be rich in the nobleness of a man. Man must be waked from the sleep of the senses, and brought out on the hill-sides of a new life; for the Sun of Righteousness was already flushing the East; the Morning Light was breaking; God was coming with fresh tokens of love to open his eyes, that he might see this new light that was to flood the world.

Let us follow, listen, and work.

THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH.

*J*ESUS returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: . . .
And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up:
and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the
sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet
Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place
where it was written,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath
anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me
to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives,
and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that
are bruised,

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minis-
ter, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the
synagogue were fastened on him.

And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture
fulfilled in your ears.

And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious
words which proceeded out of his mouth.

THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH.

JESUS stood up in the synagogue of his native Nazareth, and held the sacred roll containing the prophecy of Isaiah. He unrolled the parchment till he came to the sixty-first chapter of the roll. Here he read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." The Spirit had spoken to him; he felt its anointing. Behold, The Great Teacher. The work which Christ came to do for the soul is not the work of an hour or a day. It is the work of a life. Reverently to receive him as the Soul's Teacher, is the beginning of the work. The central word in this new Gospel is Love; for Gospel means glad tidings, and glad tidings without Love were impossible; for Love originated the tidings, and Love made them glad. Healing, sight, and liberty! gracious words these to rich as well as poor; to those at ease as well as those in trouble. Jesus does not come to take the place of God. He comes to take us by the hand and lead us to his Father and our Father.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

DESPISEST thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. . . .

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

ROMANS.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

I FEEL within a want
Forever burning there.
What I so thirst for, grant,
O thou who hearest prayer!

This is the thing I crave, —
A likeness to thy Son;
This would I rather have
Than call the world my own.

'Tis my most fervent prayer;
Be it more fervent still;
Be it my highest care;
Be it my settled will.

WILLIAM HENRY FURNESS.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

SEEK ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

. . . Be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

*The kingdom of God cometh not with observation;
Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold,
the kingdom of God is within you.*

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

FIRST seek the kingdom of God. It is a condition of soul, by which we enter through the gate of a higher life. It means the enthronement of Righteousness, which is Right put into service. This is the soul's crown. But this kingdom will not come of itself; it must be sought. Seek it as a pearl of great price. Seek first what God has put first. Jesus would have his disciples seek and find this kingdom just where all the world never thought of looking for it, "The kingdom of God is within you." Jesus lays his ear reverently to the earth to catch the whisper of his Father's spirit that he hears on mountain-top or in the valley. Live by the day, as the birds do; trouble not about to-morrow; God is bending over you with messages of love. Do not feed the body and starve the soul. The soul must grow and be clothed upon in Righteousness through the Spirit of Christ within. He came and toiled and died to bring his kingdom into human hearts. This is His Salvation.

THE BEATITUDES.

AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

THE BEATITUDES.

FROM the way Luke introduces his fragments of the Sermon on the Mount we infer that Jesus spent the whole previous night in prayer to God. This helps us to understand the spiritual exaltation of his opening words. He had been alone with God.

“Blessed be ye poor: for your’s is the kingdom of God.”

“Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled.”

High words, because spoken from the watch-tower of loftiest contemplation; but they become simple to souls that rise unto the spiritual region where they were uttered. How deep and high the thoughts! They carry us down to foundation principles, and up to eternal verities. The Sermon on the Mount is illuminated with the Fatherhood of God, as the stars illumine the great dome above us. It is the Father who paints the lily; feeds the ravens; cares for the sparrow; answers prayer. This Gospel arches a new heaven above us, and puts a new earth beneath our feet. With what power his words fell upon those who waited for them, as benighted travellers wait for the Morning!

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

*L*OVE your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you ;

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

. . . Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

. . . For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father which is in heaven.

Matt. v. vi. vii. x. xxiii.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

THE Fatherhood of God is the sublimest revelation of Christianity. The soul's cry is for a Father, and it will find no peace till it rests in a Father's arms. The Great Spirit is in living communion with our souls. Do we know Him? Do we listen for His voice and expect to hear? The presence of God is too near to be seen; too interior for the senses to lay hold on; but it must be felt in the soul as the centre of its life. Our Father! He is the sun round which all our christian doctrines revolve. Its golden beams stream all through Christ's teachings. Do we value as we should the early thought of God as it first breaks in on a pure child's mind, and consider how that thought is often the pole-star that shapes his course round the world? Love God as your Father. He loves you. Let His love waken yours. The essence of the Infinite One the finite mind cannot fathom. But when we say, Our Father, He comes forth out of the mystery of mysteries and speaks to our hearts and bids us aim at the highest conceivable ideal; an ideal that will always be above, rising in endless spirals higher, higher, higher!

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

BUT thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, . . . and cares of this life; . . .

Watch ye therefore, and pray always.

Matt. vi. Luke xxi.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

THIS prayer keeps God daily before us as "Our Father;" teaches us to hallow His name in speech and work, and to bring the kingdom of God here and now. The forgiving love of God we nightly pray for shall remind us that the forgiveness we receive is not ours to hold, but to pass on to our brother man, even till seventy times seven. Prayer is the key to hidden riches and strength which no other key will unlock. What would tempted ones do without it? The spirit of our own prayer will bring of itself deliverance from the power of evil. The Christian prays a perpetual prayer, not only on knees, but with unwearied feet, tireless hands, sweet smile. No life of nobleness was ever lived without some personal knowledge of the presence chamber of the Great All-Father. Let us live in the spirit of this prayer. It contains a depth of wisdom that still feeds the world's best thought.

THE WELL AT SYCHAR.

THEN cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar. . . . Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

Then cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. . . .

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

.
Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

John iv.

THE WELL AT SYCHAR.

THE wells around Nazareth were as symbolic to the mind of Jesus as the lilies of the field; so we learn from his words to the woman of Samaria as they sat together at the well of Sychar under the hot rays of a noon-day sun. A week-day meeting on the highway! How vast and far-reaching its results! Then were there opened wells of truth which are full to-day for thirsting humanity. Water becomes the symbol of refreshment of soul as well as of body. It is thirst that makes a draught from the living spring so grateful.

“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”

How familiar the words! We were born to them. But to great thoughts like these we need to be born again every day. How deep are God's wells! How many are the secret springs, all out of sight, which fill them! We feed on God's life and think not whence the gift. Blessed are we when Jesus opens the well, and the roots of our life touch living springs.

“Give me this water, that I thirst not.”

BETHESDA.

NOW there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

And immediately the man was made whole.

John v.

BETHESDA.

WHO does not need the strength and the warmth of the clasp of a friendly hand to guide over the cold hard steps of discouragement into the angel-touched waters of healing mercy? We are too often blind to the occasions for the helping hand on the instant need. If only the cataracts could be taken from the eyes of the soul to clear the vision! Every act of Love in the wide world repeats itself. Every kind word, like God's own word, of which it is an imperfect syllable, a stammering accent, always wakes an answer in some heart, and this again in another, so sending a ripple of helpfulness clear across the sea of human life. Love and Labor go hand in hand. Love needs Labor for expression, and Labor needs Love for inspiration. We are one body with many members: the eye for seeing; the ear for hearing; the hands for working; the feet for running; all animated with the Christ spirit of healing Love. All hear his voice bidding crippled humanity, "Rise; . . and walk."

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

FINALLY, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. . . .

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance. . . .

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Ephesians vi.

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

PRESS on, press on! ye sons of light,
Untiring in your holy fight,
Still treading each temptation down,
And battling for a brighter crown.

Press on, press on! through toil and woe,
With calm resolve, to triumph go;
And make each dark and threatening ill
Yield but a higher glory still.

Press on, press on! still look in faith
To him who conquereth sin and death;
Then shall ye hear his word, "Well done."
True to the last, press on, press on!

WILLIAM GASKELL.

LIGHT.

YE are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.

Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.

The seed is the word of God.

And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

He that doeth truth cometh to the light.

LIGHT.

GOD help us to let shine the light that His own hand hath kindled ; to take away the bushel of our own placing and to put our light on the candlestick God made for it, that it may give light to all that are in the house. The virtue of the light depends upon its power of illumination. Good works are themselves light. Doing comes closer than having. What one has he may lose ; but what one does is never lost. No star-lighted heaven speaks to the heart like a heaven-lighted soul, — a soul filled with the echoes of the spirit's voice ; a human star, touched with intelligence, warmed with love, knowing the light and love that kindled both. Each soul seems to have a sphere like the atmosphere around the earth, through which there is an outgoing on mystic threads of communication whereby its own light is imparted. There is something in this world to live for that is not riches ; something that no flood-tide of prosperity can ever bring, or ebb-tide of adversity take away ; something we carry with us wherever we go. It is what we are, our Best. God make *that* a light to some life !

THE GREAT SUPPER.

WHEN thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. . . .

Then the master of the house . . . said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

THE GREAT SUPPER.

“**C**OME ; for all things are now ready.”

Ready for whom? For you, and for me, and for everybody the wide world over. Ready for what? For our best, our very best. The supper is ready; the table is spread. There is food for all on the Father's table. The supply is inexhaustible. Come! Come! there is truth for the mind, there is love for the heart, and peace for the soul. Come! Would any thoughtless one offer an excuse for not coming to this feast? Excused from what? From the love of God? From purity of heart? From holiness of life? They do not see that it is an invitation to a feast as rich as God's love can make it. The feast is spread. He who sits at the head of the table, that dear Son of God, repeats the invitation of our Father with sweet, persuasive voice :

“Come ; for all things are now ready.”

THE PRODIGAL SON.

A CERTAIN man had two sons:

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. . . .

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him. . . . he was lost, and is found.

It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

THE far-country is very near. We may be there without knowing it; for there the soul gets bewildered, loses the points of the compass, takes a will-o'-the-wisp for a star, and is led round by the ignis fatuus of unrestrained indulgence, through the bogs of sensuality or the dark thickets of covetousness, wasting the precious substance of its God-given capacity. There is no waster like sin. It is the sure precursor of a mighty famine of the soul. Conscience, freshly commissioned from God, laid his hand on the young man, and he cried, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee!" It is confession that gives strength. It opens the door for God's angels to come in and put us in right position, Godward and manward. He returns to his father's table, that always waits while even one is wandering. It is only by fleeing from the hell of sin that the heaven of obedience is gained. His penitent confession was more grateful to his father's heart than anything put on to hide his nakedness. The cloth he needed was from the home wardrobe, from which his childhood's innocence was clothed; and it was ready.

"Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; . . .
He was lost, and is found."

THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

ANOTHER parable put he forth unto them, saying, *The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:*

Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

Who, when he found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

. . . And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

Matt. xiii.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

THE most precious treasure we know, the treasures of the kingdom of heaven within the soul, are hid in the field of our every-day experience. They are hid as the sap is hid in the tree, as Love is hid in the heart, as the soul is hid in the body. If we could only see the hope often hid in our fear, the strength hid in our weakness, the good hid in things we call evil, and see these close around our feet, we should not waste our time searching in fields not our own. The treasures of faith and hope may be found quite as often hid in the dry sands of poverty and the cold caves of adversity, as in the warm soil sunned by prosperity. The greatest being ever clothed in humanity was so poor he had not where to lay his head. Stand in thy lot, close by his side, and learn from his truth that the soul may grow rich in treasures immortal. You do not see them; God himself has hid them there, right where you stand.

NINETY AND NINE.

AND the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

And Jesus spake this parable unto them, saying,

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he' cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. . . .

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. . . .

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Luke xv. John x.

NINETY AND NINE.

JESUS is the sinner's friend, not the friend of his sins, but the friend of him whom he would separate from his sins and lead to God. Divine Love can never close and bolt the door of mercy against any soul, however far he may have wandered. The faithful shepherd leaves the ninety and nine safely grazing in the field, and searches through briar and thicket for this estray from God's fold. The faint bleat of a single lost lamb is louder in his ear than the roar of the tempest. He never rests till the lost is found, and then never drives it back, but lays the poor weary thing on his shoulder and bears it home with a glad heart. Because The Good Shepherd will always follow and bring us in, is it no matter where we stray? Because the lost will be found, is it a slight thing to be lost? Not more truly was the fish made for water or the bird for the upper air, than man for virtue, purity, and God. Sin clips the wings of the soul; leaves it to crawl on the earth instead of rising into the pure airs of holy living. Divine Love goes out to find the sin-sick child.

LITTLE CHILDREN.

THEN were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. . . .

And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. . . .

Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

LITTLE CHILDREN.

HERE Jesus comes into the Home as the children's friend.

He saw how near the throne they were. The light-hearted, happy children looked up into his sweet, calm face, knowing he loved them. How tender the invitation to come so close that he might lay his hands upon them, and tell them that, in the good time coming, the dear God had a great deal for every one of them to do. Think of the potential glory of a young life given to the highest. It is the inspiration of the Almighty that gives the understanding of childhood; an understanding which often puts to shame the doubts and misgivings of what we call our riper age. We permit the gates of care to shut off the young blood from our hearts before the time. We must receive the kingdom of God as a little child. What is it to be child-like? It is to be open-hearted toward God. It is to be rid of self-conceit, whose presence makes the heart poor. God help us to be more child-like, and pray and work and live more nearly
In His Name.

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

***B**E ye therefore followers of God, as dear children. . . .
For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in
the Lord: walk as children of light: . . .*

*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual
songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the
Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of dark-
ness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowl-
edge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and
evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

*And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving
one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

*Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the
knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the
measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

II Cor. iv. Ephesians iv. v.

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

WALK in the light! so shalt thou know
That fellowship of love
His spirit only can bestow
Who reigns in light above.

Walk in the light! and thou shalt find
Thy heart made truly his,
Who dwells in cloudless light enshrined
In whom no darkness is.

Walk in the light! and thou shalt own
Thy darkness passed away;
Because that light hath on thee shone
In which is perfect day.

Walk in the light! and e'en the tomb
No fearful shade shall wear;
Glory shall chase away its gloom,
For Christ hath conquered there.

Walk in the light! and thine shall be
A path, though thorny, bright;
For God, by grace, shall dwell in thee,
And God himself is light.

BERNARD BARTON.

A CUP OF COLD WATER.

AND Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

A CUP OF COLD WATER.

IN the ear of Heaven the music of a good deed is sweeter than the grandest anthem ever sung; every such deed lets in the good in double measure, blessing giver and receiver. This is God's stamp on the coin of Love. It is they who give most of this divine coin that are the richest, and there are none so poor that they have not at least the farthing of a kind word with which to start this greatly remunerative investment, which we may always use, but never spend. Let us coin our best thoughts into deeds. We find heaven in service.

Sunsets are beautiful, but it is the common sunshine silently coming down all day long that warms the earth and starts the seeds. Just as night retreats before the morning, and winter before the sun, climbing as now higher and higher in the heavens each day, so evil is driven out by the good shining in. It is not great deeds, but little cups of water and little farthings, though they be even all our living, that win the blessing. Thus is the water in the stone jars of little home duties changing into wine all the time.

THE SPARROW'S FALL.

WHEN there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy.

For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.

And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Matt. x. Luke xlii.

THE SPARROW'S FALL.

DEATH sooner or later comes to all. But if it be the gate to higher life, who would wish to escape it? Who would be anxious about the how or the when of the going, when He, without whom no sparrow falls, folds every child of His in His embrace? The death-angel does not make us spirits; God did that at the beginning; but it helps the spirit out of its material body into its native air. On both sides the river Love reigns. Fear ye not, therefore, children of God! heirs of Life eternal! ye are of more value than many sparrows. Fear ye not! Does the tornado sweep the earth? He "maketh the clouds his chariot: and walketh upon the wings of the wind." Does the sea engulf our dearest treasures? "The sea is his, and he made it." He "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand." He is working out His vast designs; turning defeat into victory, and making our sharpest trials tend to growth of soul. Our Father is at the helm of Destiny and "All's well!"

FORGIVENESS.

AND when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Therefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

And Jesus said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. . . .

And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. . . .

And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Matt. v. Mark xi. Luke vii. John viii.

FORGIVENESS.

WHEN God seems nearest and the Christ spirit dearest, we see most clearly, and feel most deeply, the divine quality of forgiveness. God is always ready to forgive, but man is not always ready to receive. God cannot bestow unless we take; and we cannot take forgiveness until we can give it away. There is no place for it in our hearts; they are not large enough to hold it, till then. Man, as he becomes Godlike, must forgive also. No wonder penitent Magdalene clung to Jesus, and felt a power come from heaven to cast out evil spirits. Even in this outcast woman, fit only to be stoned, as the self-righteous thought, Jesus saw the broken image of God, yet to be restored. A bruised reed he never broke, nor quenched a light because it flickered; but he bound up the wounded, and fed the dying flame with the oil of hope in God.

“Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.”

GOOD CHEER.

BE of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee!

Son, be of good cheer: thy sins be forgiven thee.

Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

And it came to pass afterward, that Jesus went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.

And all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

. . . I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

GOOD CHEER.

A CHEERFUL Christian is like a man living on the summit of a mountain. His days are longer and sunnier than in the valley. The day-spring greets him earlier, and the twilight lingers later on this child of light. We should not plant the seeds of our faith in the shadows of life alone, but also in the open fields where the sun of a healthy joy can quicken them. Keep the windows of the soul wide open, that the light and warmth of our glad religion may shine in. Find God oftener in the gladness of life. Think of Him not only in the dark days, which are so few, but also in bright days, which are so many. See Him not only through tears; but always in smiles. Think how many brooks of joy and gladness there are running along our way from youth onward. The stream of life itself is a joy; then it gives to the spirit a buoyancy that lends a healthy hue to all our thinking. Be of good cheer; Jesus brought glad tidings. Keep bright colors in your faith, and your heart shall rejoice.

“And your joy no man taketh from you.”

REST.

AND the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matt. xi. Mark vi.

REST.

MAN finds his true repose in a life that takes hold of the Eternal. Much as we need christian work, there is need of something more, Rest, Rest in God, Rest in the bosom of His Everlasting Love. "Come ye yourselves and rest awhile" at the Master's feet.

"Come unto me and I will give you rest." Come, and let our hearts be sunned and warmed in the light of this infinite peace. What sweet rest comes to the soul at night, when all day long the voice has been kind and the deed good, the thought pure, hour by hour. Such days have glorious sunsets; the beauty of God is in the clouds. Lifting others' burdens not only lightens our own but brings a peace deeper than joy over us, like the light of day as it slowly flushes the East to herald the sunrise. So our mornings and our evenings are full of Peace. Let us put on the yoke of love and obedience, which fits the soul so perfectly that it makes every duty easy and every burden light.

To the lowly is given the promise.

•

SEATS IN THE KINGDOM.

THEN came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

And he said unto her, *What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.*

But Jesus answered and said, *Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? They say unto him, We are able.*

And he saith unto them, *Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. . . .*

But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.

SEATS IN THE KINGDOM.

“YE know not what ye ask.” Seats of honor in the spiritual kingdom are not to be had for the asking. God alone knows who will be high or who low in His kingdom. If any would be chief, let him see how well he can serve. These two sons did sit close to the Master, but not in the way the motherly heart had planned. We all need a deeper baptism into Christ’s idea of Greatness. It is another name for Goodness. Jesus would win from evil by showing the divineness of Good. Let us consecrate all our faculties to Goodness. This is divine power; it is God-like. Jesus gives a new order of nobility, of divine appointment; it is character; there is none other so high. The rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, may belong to it. It does not come by birth. It cannot be bought with money, even at a great price. It is something to be won. Blessed are ye! for the nobility of Heaven itself is yours, if you will reach forth and make it yours. For, “It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.”

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

BUT covet earnestly the best gifts; . . . Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Follow after charity.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

O LOVE! O Life! our faith and sight
Thy presence maketh one;
As, through transfigured clouds of white,
We trace the noon-day sun, —

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in thee the fatherhood
And heart of God revealed

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray;
But, dim or clear, we own in thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way.

To do thy will is more than praise,
As words are less than deeds;
And simple trust can find thy ways
We miss with chart of creeds.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

THE JUDGMENT.

THEN shall the King say unto them on his right hand,
Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared
for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was
thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took
me in.

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me:
I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when
saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave
thee drink?

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked,
and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto
thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say
unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of
these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of
the least of these, ye did it not to me.

THE JUDGMENT.

OF all the parables of Jesus, there is none more solemnly impressive. Behold the ground of judgment! This new Messiah would be bound to his fellow-men by ties so vital that every kind deed or every neglect toward the least would be as toward himself. Secure from want ourselves we grow unmindful; we turn the dull ear; we are absorbed in our cares; we forget the divine message, "Inasmuch as ye did it not. . . ." Unconscious evil and very conscious virtue say in surprise, "When saw we thee an hungered . . . and did not minister unto thee?" But fortunately there is unconscious good also; this renders pure service with no selfish alloy; it shines by its own light, without any pains-taking of pouring in oil, or trimming the lamp. It says in equal surprise, "When saw we thee an hungered and fed thee?" And a voice as full of tenderness as the heart of God, says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

THE CROSS.

AND when he had called the people unto him with his disciples, also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

Let these sayings sink down into your ears.

THE CROSS.

IT is the spirit of the Cross we want: the spirit of self-denial, of patience, of submission, and calm trust. In sickness the Cross pours the auroral light of immortality upon us in our pain. But health too has its crosses, poverty its burdens, wealth its trials, adversity its discouragements, prosperity its temptations, every phase of life its crosses to be borne bravely every day. These crosses are not to crucify *us*, but to crucify *in* us that which stands between us and our Best. God's love is seen in crosses as well as crowns. Christ took the cross of duty, soon learning that it led directly to the cross of suffering and death. Here his disciples find him suffering for them all, and rising into glory by the cross on which he was lifted. Every cord for the uplifting of the world has had this dark thread of pain twisted into it. The rugged path through which the world must rise is the path of sacrifice. The Cross of Christ becomes the blessed symbol of God's forgiving love for a world that needs Redemption.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. . . .

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

LIGHT of Life! Here is a life that has Light for all!

Everybody knows this Light. It is warmer than any other; it shines; it finds its way like a sunbeam into every corner of the heart. There are flashes of light that blaze into the soul, at times, like the lightning, flooding the whole heavens at once from zenith to horizon, and that startle us by what they show of our capacity and our destiny. This Light of Life is charged with God's creative energy. It constructs character after its own likeness. It shines on barren fields, and they blossom into fruitfulness. It sends its rays into frozen hearts, and they melt into loving deeds. The structure of the sun may be told by analyzing the rays of light which it sends forth; so the light of a pure life shows the structure of the character which radiates it. This Light, Jesus says, they shall have who follow him. How follow? Listen for the voice. Obey its high behests. Whoso so walks will walk in his light who is The Light of Life.

THE BREAD OF LIFE.

*L*ABOUR not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

. . . Then Jesus said unto them, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.*

For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord, ever more give us this bread.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. . . .

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. . . .

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

. . . The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

I am that bread of life.

John vi.

THE BREAD OF LIFE.

THIS bread of heaven can nourish only those who partake ;
and none will partake but those who hunger. Here is
living bread : his truth, his life, his spirit. This is indeed
bread for the soul. It nourishes devotion. It still feeds the
hungry world. If it heals not the sick body, it heals the
sadder sickness of the heart. If it couches not the blind eye,
it pours light on darkened mind. If it raises not the
widow's son, it comforts the widow's sorrow. If it opens not
sealed ears, it unseals conscience. If it brings not strength to
palsied limb, it does start life in palsied soul. Jesus would
link life with his coming death. His body, broken on the
cross, was to become the bread of life to all the world.
God's word spoken to his soul was in his life made flesh ;
so he lives on through the ages, the Way to noblest living,
the Truth that inspires, the Life that always is.

LOVE.

A NEW commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another;

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. . . .

. . . If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

.
As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

LOVE.

LOVE is something so high that only the word, God, can compass its meaning. It is the heart of Christ. It is the life of the world. Love leans with John on the Redeemer's breast. It weeps with Peter at remembered sin, and distils from those penitential drops the elixir of a new life. It sits with Mary at Jesus' feet. It serves with Martha. It bids the man so lame with selfishness that he cannot take a step to help his brother, rise up and walk; yea, more, run, on errands of mercy. It touches the deaf ear, and the voice of the Lord is heard in the garden of the soul. The joy Love gives its possessor is God's own seal on its Divinity. The love of the Holy One is so deep toward the unholy as to love him out of evil into good. He lets His loving hand down to the lowest, that He may lift him to the highest.

How solemnly impressive are these questionings to the penitent disciple, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" thrice testing his love and ours! What a mighty legacy Jesus bequeathes to us of a work still to be done as proof of our love: "Feed my sheep"!

IMMORTALITY.

*AND leaving Nazareth, Jesus came and dwelt in Capernaum,
. . . That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by
Esaias the prophet, saying,*

*The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to
them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is
sprung up.*

*Now, a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany,
. . . Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold,
he whom thou lovest is sick.*

*When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto
death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be
glorified thereby. . . .*

*Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here,
my brother had not died. . . .*

Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

*Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in
the resurrection at the last day.*

*Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he
that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*

*Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the
angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the
resurrection. . . .*

*For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for
all live unto him.*

IMMORTALITY.

GREAT lives spring from great Faith. The golden hands on the great clock of nature never go back. The inspiring truth of man's double immortality, earthly and heavenly, having once been given to humanity, will never be let go. No season ever passes when some one may not say to a friend, "He whom thou lovest is sick;" but sickness, as Jesus says, is not unto death; for when the light of the glory of God falls upon it, it is transmuted into life. Death is not the dark valley, leading down; but the bright archway, leading up. There is another continent beyond the sea. The map of this life suggests another life; it is needful to complete the sphere; both hemispheres of life are ours, and the sea does not separate, but unites. The celestial way is still open. Can anything but our faithless hearts close the gate? Even they cannot quite close it; for light enough shines through, every time it opens, to make us say,

"Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

LET us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. . . .

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. . . .

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, . . . Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

MY God, I thank thee I may no thought
E'er deem thy chastisements severe;
But may this heart, by sorrow taught,
Calm each wild wish, each idle fear.

Thy mercy bids all nature bloom;
The sun shines bright, and man is gay;
Thine equal mercy spreads the gloom
That darkens o'er his little day.

Full many a throb of grief and pain
Thy frail and erring child must know;
But not one prayer is breathed in vain,
Nor does one tear unheeded flow.

Thy various messengers employ;
Thy purposes of love fulfil;
And, 'mid the wreck of human joy,
Let kneeling faith adore thy will.

ANDREWS NORTON.

THE UPPER ROOM.

THEN came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go, and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Luke xxii.

THE UPPER ROOM.

UPPER Room! Our soul's home has many stories; it rests on the earth, but rises to heaven. Man must not live in his basement. He must go up and look out of the windows of his intellectual chamber and put that in order; higher still, where he sees his relations to God and eternal life; yet higher, where the Divine voice is heard in the soul. Here our best thoughts come; here we make preparations for the best things we ever do in life. This Upper Room of the soul should be large, with windows all around, that the clear breezes of thought may blow through; and it must be furnished. As we sit here at the open windows of Hope we can see the bow of promise, telling us that the floods of evil will be at last stayed, and the new heaven and new earth will appear, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Here we are touched as by the finger of God; and when our eyes are shaded from the glare of earthly lights by some great sorrow, from this height we see our sorrow as only cloud-shadow, that will be followed by golden sunshine.

Life is crowned and glorified! Here make ready.

THE TRUE VINE.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

John xv.

THE TRUE VINE.

JESUS is supposed to be passing with his disciples from the Upper Room to the Mount of Olives; and he, ever listening, hears the lesson God had written on the vine. He was the vine of God's planting; his disciples were the branches. But they would not all cleave to the vine. Some would drop off, like Judas; some would soon wither under the hot rays of temptation and deny him, like Peter. Jesus spoke of a union, not of carpentry, but of growth. Let us hold fast to the fruit-bearing result of that union, under the pruning and training hand of The Great Vine Dresser. When we see a branch bending under the weight of ripe clusters, we do not ask if it abides in the vine; so the clusters of virtue prove that our branch is in living union with the living Vine. Proximity cannot make union; distance cannot break it. Let the same sap of life that fills the vine flow continually into our little branch also, that so we may Abide in The Vine.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

AND in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives.

And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.

And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

IF Jesus, pure and exalted as he was, needed the Mount, how much more do we, weak as we are, dim of vision, easily tempted, so liable to fall? Our Mount of Olives becomes the Mount of Vision. It faces the City of God; it overlooks the valleys of trial, and the plains of daily toil. From this height we never see life a failure. The valley where we live is so full of noise that the higher call gets faint response; but when a Divine Power lifts us to the Mount, the echo of that call comes sharp and clear from every peak of our soul's range. What should we do in sorrow, if there were no Mount of Olives we could flee to for comfort? Our Gethsemane is here; and, if we follow the old familiar path trod by the Man of Sorrows, we, too, shall find strength. Who so strong or so weak, who so wise or so foolish, who so self-sufficient or so self-distrustful, as to feel no need of ascending the Mount with the Master?

COMING AGAIN.

A LITTLE while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

Then said some of his disciples among themselves, *What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?*

They said therefore, *What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.*

Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, *Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?*

Verily, verily, I say unto you, *That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

COMING AGAIN.

JESUS knew his work on earth was short. This "little while" troubled his disciples. It was himself, as well as his teaching, that won their hearts. He made their yoke easy and their burden light. His going away would break the spell of his personal presence, even though it brought the Comforter. How does Christ come? He is coming again and yet again, always coming, as Son of God and Saviour from selfishness and sin, stimulating us to live as heirs with him of the Life Eternal. This world is fairer, life richer, human loves deeper, hope brighter, God nearer, and heaven dearer, for the coming of His Spirit in our midst. Let us feel the beating of his great heart of Love. Lowly hearts cannot let him go; heroic hearts cling to him; philanthropic hearts receive a new baptism of his spirit. Whose heart does not say, All hail! to such a coming, not in the clouds of heaven, but in the souls of men?

"I will come to you."

THE LAST PRAYER.

LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

. . . I go to prepare a place for you.

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. . . .

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. . . .

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. . . .

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

THE LAST PRAYER.

WORDS that never grow old! Springs of comfort that never fail! The troubled heart pants for the comfort they give. His spirit breathes upon the heart.

All who have felt the dawning of a higher life in their souls know what Prayer is. Prayer rises into trust; so prayer and trust are one. When first we long for the Christian life, how natural the cry, Father, help me. When sorrow for sin is waked, Father, forgive me. When great joy comes making the heart glad, Our Father, I thank thee! Prayer opens the door of that angel ministry at Gethsemane, and it lets angels of comfort into sorrowing hearts still. Gethsemane might lower and Calvary rear its cross before Jesus, but the will of his Father was his will. The Christ-spirit qualifies all its asking with, "Thy will, not mine, be done." Prayer is the child clasping his Father's hand, looking into his Father's face, warming himself in his Father's smile, asking nothing but to be closer, closer, closer to Him.

THE LAST MORNING.

AFTER these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. . . .

They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. . . . And for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.

John xxi.

THE LAST MORNING.

THOSE early disciples, who belonged to the true peerage in the realm of Character, who answered his first call at the sea-side, obey now his word by the self-same sea. Listen to the call, "Children, have ye any meat?" Often, like these faithful followers, we, after having toiled all night and caught nothing, shall hear a voice, "Cast the net on the right side and thou shall find." Happy for us if we know, as did Jesus' loved disciple, "It is the Lord." Let us launch out into the deep and let down our nets for a draught; and lo! the unbroken net will be full! We can tend the lines and draw the seines; but lines and seines and boat and sea are made and owned by a higher Power. How sublime is the faith of Jesus that no word of his could ever be lost, though spoken only to listening ears! The human soul was his chosen papyrus; on this only he wrote.

THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

AND they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed them in the way.

Much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. . . .

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him

And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

Matt. xxi. Mark xi. Luke xix. John xii.

PASSION WEEK OF HUMAN LIFE.

PALM SUNDAY. PROMISE.

PASSION Week comes to us in our human life, not always in consecutive order, seldom crowded into so brief a space. Some spend a longer, some a shorter, time among the Palms, breathing the soft air of fond hopes, and feeding eye and heart on the tropical prophecy of a good time coming. We all have our palmy days, days of bright Promise; they are our spring seasons when the snow melts on the cold slopes of life, and the daffodils come out to greet us. Song is not only in the air, but in our hearts. We think what we would do. We lay our plans. We map out our way, and gird up our loins to walk in it, thanking God that the stones in our path are so few, and the flowers so many. No lions in the way, no slough of despond to cross; a clear, smooth path seems opened right up to the City of God. Palm branches of great expectations are spread in our path. It is our Palm Sunday; we are on our way to Jerusalem.

Thirty-fifth Day. — Monday before Easter.

Holy Week.

PURGING THE TEMPLE.

AND Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves ;

And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen ; and poured out the changer's money, and overthrew the tables ;

And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence ; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer ? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple ; and he healed them.

And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David ; they were sore displeased,

And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say ? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea ; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise ?

And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany ; and he lodged there.

Matt. xxi. Mark xi. John ii.

Thirty-fifth Day. — Monday before Easter.

Passion Week of Human Life.

PURIFICATION.

WE are in the city now, but it is not the Jerusalem of our hope, nor from above. The Palm branches lie withered by the way-side. We see a work of purification before us, not in the city, but in our souls. It is not the old temple built by Solomon, but the new temple of our hearts, built by God and for the Holy Ghost, that needs purifying now. Sheep and oxen are in the House of Prayer; money-changers are turning it into a place of traffic. The animal is usurping the spiritual. We need to hear the prophetic voices of the children still crying, "Hosanna," in the Temple. The scourge we need, to drive the appetites and passions out of our sacred places, is not made of hemp, but heroism; a heroism that is valiant in the conscious aid of an Invisible Arm. The moral sentiments must be quickened, conscience voiced, faith stimulated, hope brightened, selfishness driven out by self-denial, and the Father's House purified for the Father's service.

"Know ye that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Holy Week.

CONFUTING THE SADDUCEES.

AND they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. . . . And they say unto him, . . . Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? . . . But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.

And they brought it. And he said unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's.

And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; . . . And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God? . . . He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.

Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

Thirty-sixth Day. — Tuesday before Easter.

Passion Week of Human Life.

CONTROVERSY.

THE cleansed temple within does not stay cleansed. The sheep and oxen and money-changers, though they leave at our bidding, come again, and need renewed expelling. Jesus is supposed to have purged the temple near the beginning of his ministry, as well as at its close. The Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees of eighteen hundred years ago, give us little trouble. But we find in each of our hearts Pharisaic self-sufficiency, that makes us content with tithing mint, anise, and cumin, even though we omit justice, mercy, and truth; we find Herodian quibbling, bewildering us with subtle questions about tribute paid in pennies, when our whole souls should be a tribute of praise to God; and Sadducean unbelief, telling us there is no spirit, that death is the end of man, and immortality a false hope. It is the great day of faith battling with doubt. There are those who do not know of this conflict; to whom faith and hope are as easy as song to the bird. Let all such thank God and sing on! Happy, too, are they who, having doubted, having gained strength in the struggle, as the Oak grows strong through wrestling with the stormy wind, can silence unbelief, as Jesus did.

Thirty-seventh Day. — Wednesday before Easter.

Holy Week.

SELLING THE MASTER.

THEN entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

And he went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

Jesus being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. . . .

She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

Matt. xxvi. Mark xiv. Luke xxii.

Thirty-seventh Day. — Wednesday before Easter.

Passion Week of Human Life.

BARGAIN.

THE bargain of Judas is one of the most astounding records in the New Testament. So base a deed for so small a sum! We are not tempted to the Judas act; but are we never tempted to betray the truth and spirit that Jesus stands for in this world? Our age is an age of Bargain. How many, since Judas, have betrayed Christ's principles for less than thirty pieces of silver? The tempter whispers, So many pieces for so much principle. But if, by the power of God, we can say, "Get thee behind me, Satan," we are lifted into a purer atmosphere, and are prepared to go at the close of the day to the Bethany of the home affections, where the alabaster box of very precious ointment is broken, whose fragrance goes all around the world; and where love utters itself, and brings from the Master's lips those words that have comforted lowly hearts ever since, —

"She hath done what she could."

Holy Week.

THE LAST SUPPER.

NOW when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. . . .

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

And supper being ended, . . . He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. . . .

So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. . . .

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Thirty-eighth Day. — Thursday before Easter.

Passion Week of Human Life.

COMMUNION.

THURSDAY brings us to The Upper Chamber, the Feast of Love, the eating of the Passover, the Last Supper, the memorial washing of the feet, and those wonderful discourses in the heart of John's Gospel which have comforted countless souls for near two thousand years. Here we have Communion with the Soul of souls; seasons when we rise out of controversy into trust; when tempting thoughts leave us, and angel thoughts come to minister to us; when we feel God near, and make His arm a pillow for our weary souls; when faith becomes sight, and hope, fruition; when lowliest services, wrought in love, are fragrant with the breath of heaven; when the bread of life is broken and the cup of blessing poured; when our prayer forgets to ask, in its desire to praise. Let us come closer to that Holy Spirit in which Jesus lived. But we cannot stay in this Upper Room. Like the Master we must arise and gird ourselves to wash the feet of those more weary.

Holy Week.

DAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

AND when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. . . One of the malefactors said, . . and we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama, sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, . . saith, I thirst.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Thirty-ninth Day. — Good Friday.

Passion Week of Human Life.

CRUCIFIXION.

FRIDAY stands for The Great Tragedy.

We use the word Crucifixion in a very modified sense, as symbolic of those deep experiences when our fondest hopes are crucified, and the sun that made our life shine with the glory of heaven becomes darkened at noon-day. Not all of us may have come to the Friday of Passion Week; but it lies in our life-path. The River of Life, to some, runs almost without a ripple from source to sea; while, to others, it is full of dashing rapids, falls, whirlpools, and counter-currents. Few do not know of crucified hopes, when we pour out our prayers and tears beneath the olives of our grief. Some show such seasons more than others, and wear the Cross on their garments, as the Crusaders did; some bear the Cross in their souls, and give no sign. It is only when we have passed on through these experiences that we can understand how the Friday of Crucifixion can become the Good Friday of the soul.

Holy Week.

EASTER-EVEN.

AND now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath,

Joseph of Arimathaea, an honorable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. . . .

And . . . he gave the body to Joseph.

And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred weight.

Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, . . . and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Josès beheld where he was laid.

And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

Fortieth Day. — Saturday before Easter.

Passion Week of Human Life.

DARKNESS.

WE are with the Marys, preparing the spices with which to embalm our buried treasures. Just as that long silent Saturday, when the dead body of Jesus lay in the tomb, was darker than the tragical Friday, so the period that follows close upon any great grief is harder to bear than the day the sorrow came. Our treasures are entombed, and a stone, too great for us to move, is laid over the door of our sepulchre. All is dark, and God seems too far away to hear our cry. Here is darkness indeed! But the deeper the darkness, the nearer we are to the light, though we know it not. The clouds may hide the stars, they can never extinguish them. God's voice is in the cloud, though we may not hear. But this is only a day. It may be a long one; still, like all days, it will have its close. We fall asleep in our tears, our prayers half said, it may be. No matter. God knows.

Easter Day;
Day of the Resurrection.

IN the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre, . . . bringing the spices which they had prepared. . . . And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

And the angel said unto the women, Fear not ye: he is not here: for he is risen, as he said.

And they remembered his words.

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she . . . seeth two angels in white . . . and they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Easter Day ;
"The Great Morning."

THANKS be to God that every night, however dark, has its morning! We wake; the light of a new day streaks the East. We go at once to the tomb, as Mary did, carrying our spices of deathless love. We wonder if there be any power strong enough to roll that stone away. But lo! as we look, it is rolled away, and an angel voice says, "Not here, but risen." The graves of our loved ones are empty now. It is Easter with us, the octave of our Palm Sunday. The old note of joy is not repeated; but another note is struck, an octave higher. The promise of our Palm Sunday is fulfilled, but not in the way we then hoped. Two suns rise this morning: one to quicken the earth, the other to quicken the soul. No wonder it has been called "The Great Morning." Would we could always live in the light of it; that all the experiences of our Passion Week, our season of Promise, of Purification, of Controversy, of Bargain, of Communion, of Crucifixion, of Darkness, might be lighted with the Resurrection hopes of the Immortal Day!

AND they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. . . .

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you.

ATHANASIA.

THE ship may sink,
And I may drink
A hasty death in the bitter sea ;
But all that I leave
In the ocean-grave
Can be slipped and spared, and no loss to me.

What care I,
Though fall the sky,
And the shrivelling earth to a cinder turn ?
No fires of doom
Can ever consume
What never was made nor meant to burn.

Let go the breath !
There is no death
To the living soul, nor loss, nor harm.
Not of the clod
Is the life of God ;
Let it mount, as it will, from form to form.

CHARLES GORDON AMES.

JESUS LIVED ON THE MOUNT. SO WE HAVE
TO CLIMB TO SEE WHAT HE SAW. AND THIS
IS WHAT HE WOULD HAVE US DO: TAKE HIS
HAND, LOOK UP, AND CLIMB.

RISE, my soul, and stretch thy wings, —
Thy better portion trace;
Rise, from transitory things,
Towards heaven thy native place:
Sun and moon and stars decay,
Time shall soon this earth remove;
Rise, my soul, and haste away
To seats prepared above.

Rivers to the ocean run,
Nor stay in all their course;
Fire ascending seeks the sun, —
Both speed them to their source:
So a soul that's born of God
Pants to view his glorious face,
Upward tends to his abode,
To rest in his embrace.

ROBERT SEAGRAVE.

*AND Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me ;
for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.*

*And as many as touched were made
perfectly whole.*

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Sunday next before Easter.

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Easter Day ;

Day of the Resurrection.

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Passion Week of Human Life.

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Easter Day ;

“ The Great Morning.”

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